

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
TO SESTATE WASHDC 1489  
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL NICE

UNCLAS MARSEILLE 0083

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT  
SUBJECT: 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

### I. SUMMARY

THE ELECTION MILL CONTINUES TO CHURN IN THE MARSEILLE DISTRICT. WITH ONE WEEK TO GO TO THE VOTING PERIOD, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE CHANGE FROM THE SITUATION REPORTED REFTEL. IN GENERAL, THE CANDIDATES ARE CONDUCTING VERY ACTIVE CAMPAIGN WITH A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON GETTING OUT INTO THE PUBLIC ARENA TO GIVE SPEECHES, ANSWER QUESTIONS, SHAKE HANDS, AND KISS BABIES. THIS GRASS ROOTS POLITICING IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THIS REGION WHERE A SURPRISINGLY LARGE CONTENT OF VOTERS ATTITUDES TOWARDS CANDIDATES TURNS ON PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONALITY WHAT THE CANDIDATE IS GOING TO DO NOW FOR THE VOTER, AND PERSONAL FAMILIARITY.

### II. SAME LOCAL FACTORS BEARING ON THE POLITICAL PROCESS

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1) A POINT OF VIEW FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AS WELL AS AMONG MANY OF THE MORE CONSERVATIVE SOCIALIST SUPPORTERS, EVEN SOME FRANK SOCIALIST POLITICIANS, IS THAT SOMEHOW THE WHOLE ELECTION PROCESS WILL PASS BENIGNLY AND PRODUCE A GOVERNMENT OF MUCH THE SAME POLICY PROFILE AS THAT EXISTS TODAY. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THESE PEOPLE, THEY DISPLAY AN ALMOST FORCED RELUCTANCE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH

THE QUESTION OF WHAT MAY HAPPEN AND HOW THEY WILL AFFECTED  
IN THE SHORT AND LONGER RUN IF A PC SUPPORTED LEFT GAINS A  
LEGISLATIVE MAJORITY.

2) IN CIRCONSCRIPTIONS HAVING A ROUGHLY EQUAL THREE-WAY  
STANDOFF BETWEEN THE MAJORITE, PS, AND PC, THERE ARE SIGNS OF  
A GROWING SENTIMENT THAT THE AVERAGE VOTER OPT FOR THE  
MAJORITE CANDIDATE ON THE SECOND RUUND RATHER THAN THE  
PC SHOULD THE RUN -OFF BE BETWEEN THOSE TWO, AND THERE ARE  
NO OVERRIDING FACTOR THAT FAVOR THE PC CANDIDATE.

3) ECONOMIC PROBLEMS CONTINUE TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THE  
INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL CONTESTS. THE WEAKENED DEMAND FOR  
SHIPBUILDING AND SHIP REPAIR INDUSTRIES HAS SEVERELY HURT  
DOCKYARD WORKERS IN PLACES LIKE LA CIOTAT AND SETE WHERE  
MILITANT PC CANDIDATES WILL BE SHOO-IN WINNERS IN REFLECTION  
OF WORKERS' HOPES THAT THEY WILL FORCE THE CENTRAL GOVERN-  
MENT TO GIVE MORE WORK TO THE YARDS. THERE IS LITTLE  
PERCEPTION OF THE ECONOMIC FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT  
WEAKNESS IN BUSINESS FOR EUROPEAN YARDS GENERALLY, AND THE  
PC MAINTAINS ITS LINE THAT THE LEFT WILL BRING THE SHIPYARD  
WORKERS THE BUSINESS THEY NEED, THOUGH JUST HOW IS NEVER  
EXPLAINED.

LEFTIST SYMPATHIS ARE ALSO HEALTHY AND IN MARGINALLY  
PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL REGIONS, MOST OF WHICH ARE CENTERED  
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ON WINE GRAPE PRODUCTION. PRODUCERS AND WORKERS ALIKE  
BELIEVE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS DONE FAR TOO LITTLE FOR  
THEM, CHIEFLY BY NOT SUFFICIENTLY RESTRICTING LOWER PRICED  
WINE IMPORTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING EEC SOURCES  
AND THROUGH INSUFFICIENT INCREASES IN THE FLOOR PRICE FOR  
GOVERNMENT WINE-ALCOHOL PURCHASES. AGAIN, THERE IS NO REAL  
FOCUS ON HOW TO CURE THE PROBLEM IN THE LONG RUN, INSTEAD A  
DEMAND FOR A QUICK FIX IN TERMS OF HIGHER INCOME NOW.

4) UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN  
URBAN AREAS CONTINUES UNCOMFORTABLY HIGH AND HAS BEEN  
TEMPORARILY WORSENER BY THE GENERAL TIGHTENING OF ALL  
BUSINESS COMMITMENT DURING THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD. THIS  
POOL OF DISCONTENT IS A VOLATILE ELEMENT IN THE ELECTION  
EQUATION, AND CLEARLY MANY YOUNG PERSONS WITHOUT JOBS WILL  
VOTE LEFT. OFTEN FAR LEFT.

YET, AS A WHOLE, THE UNEMPLOYED YOUNG HAVE NOT BECOME AS  
RADICALIZED AS MANY PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT WOULD BE THE CASE.  
IN FACT, A CYNICAL DISINTEREST IN POLITICS IS FREQUENTLY  
MANIFESTED WITHIN THIS GROUP. THOUGH IT REMAINS UNCLEAR  
JUST HOW MUCH THIS ATTITUDE WILL TRANSLATE INTO SHUNNING

THE POLLS, THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE YOUTH WILL NOT BE AS HIGH AS EARLIER BELIEVED WHICH USUALLY WILL WORK IN FAVOR OF THE MAJORITY.

### III. THE CURRENT SITUATION AT THE POINTS CHAUDS

THE CLOSE RACES WITHIN THE DISTRICT, DESCRIBED REFTEL, REMAINS UNCERTAIN NOW. IN MARSEILLE THE MAIRE S CLOSE SUPPORTER EMILE LOO HOLDS A VERY THIN EDGE IF ANY OVER RPR CANDIDATE LUCAS. THE OUTCOME OF THREE CONTESTS IN THE VAUCLUSE IS STILL OBSCURE. THE LEFT S FAVORITE IN AVIGNON, SARFATI, CONTINUES TO SUFFER FROM LACK OF PROFILE AND MR. ROUX (RPR) MAINTAINS HIS STRONG ATTACKS AND HIS GOOD CHANCE TO WIN. AT ORANGE IT APPEARS THAT RPR S SORTANT BERARD NOW

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HAS A SLIGHTLY BETTER CHANCE OF HOLDING HIS SEAT AGAINST MARIN, THE PC CHALLENGER. AT CARPENTRAS, THE CHANCES SEEM A BIT LESS CERTAIN THAT THE SEAT WILL MOVE FROM THE LEFT TO THE PR THOUGH MAYOR CHARRETIER (PR) STILL IS STRONG CONTENDER FOR VICTORY. AT THE PC CITATED OF NIMES, VETERAN CAMPAIGNER MAIRE JOURDAN (PC) RETAINS HIS STRONG HOLD OVER NIMOIS VOTERS. HOWEVER, JEAN CLAUDE SERVAN SCHREIBER (PR) HAS BEEN WORKING VERY HARD AMONG THE VOTERS OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS. HIS MODERATE, SUBSTANTIVE, AND BRIGHT-HOPEFUL APPROACH IS WINNING HIM SUPPORTERS, AND THOUGH IT LOOKS AS IF JOURDAN WILL HOLD HIS SEAT, IT MAY WELL NOT BE WITH THE PLURALITY OR THE EASE THAT HE HAS ENJOYED IN THE PAST. SERVAN SCHREIBER ALSO PROVING TO BE A DETERMINED FIGHTER, AND THOUGH HE MAY LOSE THIS ONE, HE STATES THAT HE IS GOING TO REMAIN ON THE SCENE FOR THE LONG RUN. WITH JOURDAN AGING AND RUMORED TO BE IN PROBLEMATIC HEALTH., WITH NO UP AND COMING LOCAL YOUNGER PC ADHERENT BEING GROOMED TO TAKE HIS PLACE, SERVAN SCHREIBER MAY WELL HAVE A BRIGHT FUTURE.

IN MONTPELLIER, THE FIGHT GOES ON BETWEEN DEPUTE/MAIRE FRECHE (PS) AND CHALLENGER EX-MAIRE DELMAS RUNNING AS THE MAJORITE CANDIDATE. THE OUTCOME IS MOST UNCERTAIN. THE SORTANT LIMOUZY (RPR) AT CASTRES APPEARS TO HOLD A SLIGHT LEAD, DUE IN LARGE PART TO PS-PC DISUNITY. IN THE FAR WEST, AT PERPIGNAN SORTANT ALDUY IS FEELING THE RESULTS OF HIS REJECTION SEVERAL YEARS AGO OF SUPPORT FOR AND BY THE PC. HE IS RUNNING NOW LARGELY AS AN INDEPENDANT, AND HAS AS PRINCIPAL PROTAGONISTS IN FIRST TOUR THE PC (COSTA), THE PS(JORMAIN) AND THE RPR (BERTRAND). IF ON THE SECOND TOUR HE COMPETES AGAINST THE PC CANDIDATE HE MOST PROBABLY WILL BE THE WINNER. HOWEVER, IF HE IS TO FACE THE PS CANDIDATE FOR THE RUN OFF, HE SEEMS TO HAVE BUT AN EVEN CHANCE TO WIN. FOR OUR PART, WE BELIEVE HE WILL KEEP HIS SEAT. COMING BACK TO MARSEILLE,

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OUR OWN GASTON DEFFERRE WILL WIN HIS RACE BUT PROBABLY WITH  
A MUCH LOWER PLURALITY THAN IN 1973 DUE TO SUBSTANTIALY  
LESSENEED SECOND ROUND PC SUPPORT. MEIMA

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